13: Sarytschew--8-9 N-3 (1785-90) 1806 Yakut
116, 273, 276, 574, 618

"From Jakutsk to the river Aldan, 350 wersts distant, the road led me through Jakutish ulusses, or dwelling-places, over plains scattered with woods, lakes, corn-fields, and meadows. The woods, everywhere, consisted of larch and beech-trees. An uluss comprehends a certain number of dwellings, under the government of a Knäsck (1), or elder. We generally passed our nights in the jurts of these Knäsks,

1. Knäs--the diminutive of this word signifies, in Russian, a prince.

and were always received with great kindness. Hospitality is, in fact, the first virtue among the Jakuts in general. No sooner does a traveller arrive at a place, than they hasten towards him, helping him off his horse, and conducting him into their jurt, enlarging their fire, [9] taking off his clothes, and cleaning them from the snow, &c. The bed is made ready for him in the most retired place, the table covered with the best their house can afford, and his comfort consulted in every particular to the utmost of their power; while to all this civility they sometimes add the present of a fox's or a sable's skin, I always strove to repay their kindness by such trifles as I knew to be most acceptable. Tobacco is a great luxury with them; but they are so extravagantly fond of brandy, that when one glass is given them they make no scruple of asking for a second, and even a third."

13: Sarytschew--9 N-3 (1795-90) 1806 Yakut
116, 144, 197

"The Jakuts are probably descended from an ancient race of Tartars not yet converted to Mahometanism. This appears evident from a similarity of their features, their mode of life, and still more their language, which approaches so nealy [sic] to the Tartar dialect, that one of my attendants, who was a Tartar, understood most of what they said without any difficulty."

13: Sarytschew--9 [2] N-3 (1785-90) 1806 Yakut
116, 262, 651, 797

"The number of Jakuts who have embraced the Christian faith is not inconsiderable, yet the majority are of the poorer class, who have submitted to be baptised perhaps in order to be freed for some years from the poll-tax. The rich are not disposed to renounce a plurality of wives, nor the use of meat, butter, milk, and above all, horse-flesh, during the fasts, as enjoined by the Catholic faith. The latter is the greatest delicacy they can possibly conceive; and they often tell the Russians, that if they were once to make a proper meal from the flesh of a horse, they would in future prefer it to the tenderest beef. They eat the fat of horses and cows mostly raw, without any addition, and drink melted butter with the greatest avidity; which latter they regard as an excellent remedy for many disorders, and rub their sick with it when necessary. By way of pacifying a cross child, they put a piece of raw fat into its hand to suck. In summer, when the mares foal, they make their kumys from the milk, after the manner of the Tartars. Their beverage, in winter, consists of sour milk, unchurned butter, and water, which I found indeed not unpalatable. Hence it will appear, that almost all their food is composed of things forbidden by our (the Greek) church; but our priests keep the converted Jakuts very strict to their duty, and will not allow them to touch a single article that is prohibited; but as they have neither corn, fruit, nor fish, it is almost impossible for them to abstain so rigidly. The cause, therefore, why so many Jakuts remain heathens, may be attributed to the indulgence of their appetites."

13: Sarytschew--9-10 N-3 (1785-90) 1806 Yakut
116, 231, 342

"The Jakutish jurts are built from the ground, describing a square of more or less magnitude, according to the size of the family. They first drive three rows of poles fast into the earth, [10] the middle one of which is rather higher than the two on each side. On these poles they lay five beams crossways and sloping, which are covered with rough planks, and afterwards with herbs, mould, and dung. The middle of the interior is generally occupied by a hearth, from whence the smoke is carried out by a sort of chimney, composed of long thick sticks, plaistered in the inside with pitch. The wood is placed in an upright direction on the hearth, and the fire is never extinguished during the winter. Broad benches are fixed round the walls of the jurts or huts, which are divided off by partitions into sleeping places. Their horned cattle are kept in a separate building connected with the jurt by an opening, through which they pass, from whence the whole dwelling is filled with an offensive smell. The summer jurts are altogether different from the winter ones, and have another name, being called urasses; they are round and conical, made of long poles, and covered on the outside with the bark of trees."

13: Sarytschew--10 N-3 (1785-90) 1806 Yakut
116, 291

"The rich Jakuts wear the skins of reindeer, and the poor those of horses. Their dress is the same in summer and winter, except, that in the latter case they use the fur with the skin, and in the former the skin alone. Instead of a shirt they cover the breast with a cloth, and over that wear a fur waistcoat and a long coat of the same. Their breeches do not reach the knee, which has a distinct covering, fastened with thongs, and continued from the calf by a leathern buskin, over which they wear a sort of boots, called, in their language, eterbesen. Those in better circumstances decorate their hips with cloths of red or blue, trimmed quite round, and fastened to the girdle."

13: Sarytschew--10[2] N-3 1785-90 (1806) Yakut
116, 276, 757

"Whenever a Jakut sets out on a journey, he binds his large knife, fixed in a long stick, to his girdle, and takes his steel, flint, and tinder with him; the latter of which is prepared from wormwood. In the hind part of his boot he fixes his wooden pipe, having a short tube, split down the middle, for the convenience of being cleaned, and fastened with thongs. He mixes more than half saw-dust with his tobacco, the fumes of which he mostly swallows until he is thrown into a state of stupefaction. He defends this practice on the ground of its efficacy against abdomenal complaints."

13: Sarytschew--10 [3] N-3 1785-90 (1806) Yakut
116, 291, 301

"The ordinary dress of the Jakutish female differs but little from that of the female [sic], but their best garments are longer and larger than usual, being bordered with many pieces of coloured cloth and Chinese stuffs, worked with bits of silver and copper of different figures, and edged with a broad trimming of beaver and otter's skin. For this dress they have a particular cap, embellished with three tufts of feathers. They adorn their ears with large silver rings, and form their hair into a long queue."

13: Sarytschew--12 N-3 (1785-90) 1806 Yakut
116, 782, 823

"On our way we had occasion to cross a great chain of mountains, named Atbas, to which the Jakuts pay homage, as in fact they do to all distinguished mountains, by depositing offerings of horse-hair on the trees. My guides did not omit this ceremony, each Jakut tearing out some hairs from his horse's tail, or mane, and hanging them on the nearest branches of the trees."

13: Sarytschew--13 N-3 (1785-90) 1806 Yakut-1-2
116, 302, 756, 786

"In the mean time, I had an opportunity of witnessing the incantations of a Jakutish shaman. He was invited by a sick person to appease the evil spirit supposed to have sent the disorder. The shaman exchanged his usual Jakutish dress for the habit of his office, made of reindeer leather (called Rudwuga), which reached not much above the knee, and was covered over with narrow thongs, and thin bits of iron of different shapes and sizes. Having made his arrangements, he untied his hair that was fastened together upon his head (1), smoked a pipe of tobacco, took his tambourine, seated

1. The shamans only let their hair grow, the other Jakuts cutting their's off, after the manner of the Russian peasantry.

himself in the midst of the jurt, and beating it first at long intervals with his bolujach, or a flat stick covered with reindeer-skin, sung a shaman's song; in which, as my interpreter told me, he challenged all the seven spirits under his command. A few minutes afterwards he began to beat his tambourine again, and bawl with great vehemence, standing up and addressing himself in different positions; and then to jump and hop about the sick person to the sound of his instrument, at the same time screaming with a horrible voice, and distorting himself in a hideous manner. His head, with the dishevelled hair, rolled backward and forward with such rapidity that it seemed to be

moved by springs; his eyes glared like those of a maniac; and falling soon after, from the violent exertion, into a sort of swoon, two Jakuts used their endeavours to support him. Recovering in a few minutes, he called for a knife, with which he stabbed himself in the body, and commanded a Jakut to drive in the weapon to the hilt; then going to the hearth, he took out three burning coals, and swallowing them, danced without discovering any symptoms of pain. At length he pulled the knife out of his body; and, after vomiting the coals with some difficulty, began to prophesy that the sick man would be better if he offered a horse to the wicked spirit which tormented him; at the same time defining the colour of the horse to be sacrificed. In all such cases, the lot, of course, always falls upon the fattest and choicest."

13: Sarytschew--13-14 N-3 (1785-90) 1806 Yakut
116, 554, 756, 782

"The shamans demand nothing for their trouble, but are contented with what is given them: they have, however, always the privilege of the first seat at the feast on the sacrifice, when they eat with a voracious appetite. For the evil spirit they set apart the head, legs, tail, and skin; which, when stretched upon a pole, are hung on a birch, or larch-tree, from whence they are never removed. [14]

The credit which the shamans enjoy with all these people, prevents them from being suspected of any deception; and the conceit of their holding an intercourse with evil spirits, confirms every one still more in the opinion, that whatever happens through the shaman is effected in a supernatural way by the aid of devils. This prejudice of course affords them an opportunity of imposing several tales and absurdities upon the superstitious ignorance of the multitude; such as pretending to have the power of knowing the past, present, and future; of commanding the winds and storms; of producing fine or bad weather; of finding things that are lost; of healing the sick, affording good sport to the hunter, &c and all which they never neglect to turn to their own advantage."

13: Sarytschew--42 N-3 (1785-90) 1806 Yakut
116, 158

"On the 19th of November we reached the river Aldan, and the first Jakutish jurts. On our entrance, a ludicrous scene ensued, which was not so perfectly agreeable to the poor doctor [RCH: i. e. the Russian doctor who accompanied the author on his journey], who felt himself violently assailed in the face, without being able to discover through his mask the quarter from whence he received the assault. From the shrieks, he doubtless conjectured it to be a female, as it in reality was, who, in a species of frenzy, had flown at the doctor to tear off his mask. After we had forcibly released him from her rude embrace, she continued screaming until she fell exhausted and senseless to the ground. The Jakuts regard such fits as a species of disorder attributable to terror, to which their women, particularly those in years, are very much subject. The patients in this case, have the name of miratschkens."

13: Sarytschew--46 N-3 (1785-90) 1806 Yakut
116, 333, 501

"Here we found some River-Tungusians, so called from their having no reindeer, and paddling incessantly about the river in their birch canoes, which serve at the same time for their habitations. These canoes are very small, and much in use among the Jakuts, in lakes and rivers. They are composed of twigs, plaited round long poles, which answer the purpose of ribs, and are altogether covered with the bark of the birch tree. The cavities are filled up with a sort of cement, which the Jakuts extract from boiled cream."

13: Sarytschew--47-48 N-3 (1785-90) 1806 Yakut
116, 261, 577

"This failure in the stock of their provisions [RCH: on the journey of the author up the Judoma River] originated with the intemperance of the Jakuts, who seized every opportunity that offered for devouring their allowance as long as it lasted. We no sooner stopped to rest, or spend the night, than they had [48] their kettle on the fire, and did not leave it until we pursued our journey. They spent the intervals of rest in eating; and practised petty thefts on each other, when their own stock was exhausted. Thus they passed the whole night without sleep, and were drowsy throughout the next day.

It might naturally be expected, for such extraordinary voracity to be attended with ill consequences; and yet this was by no means the case. What they made a practice of devouring at one meal, would have killed almost any other person; but on them it had no visible effect. Their stomachs seemed to be of the ostrich kind, well fitted for the task of perpetual digestion."

13: Sarytschew--48 N-3 (1785-90) 1806 Yakut
116, 261

"One of our men had an allowance of four poods of butter and fat, (above 100 English pounds) and two poods of rye-flour, an ample provision for the heartiest labourer; and yet a fornight had not elapsed, before he began to complain of having nothing to eat. I could not credit what he said, until the other Jakuts informed me, to my infinite astonishment, that this man occasionally consumed at home, in the space of 24 hours, the hind-quarter of a large ox, and half a pood of fat, with a proportionate quantity of melted butter for his drink. But the appearance of the man did not bear them out in their assertions; for he was small of stature,and very meagre. Having therefore a mind to make the trial of his gormandizing powers, I had a thick porridge of rice boiled with three pounds of butter, weighing together 28 pounds. Although the glutton had already breakfasted, yet he sat down with great eagerness, and, to my perfect amazement, consumed the whole without stirring from the spot. The extension of his stomach betrayed indeed a more than ordinary fullness, but otherwise, he discovered not the slightest symptom of having been injured of molested by it; and would in fact have been prepared for the renewal of his gluttony the next day. I advised our cormorant, however, to practise a little forbearance in future, and portion out the allowance given him for the time appointed. He now abstained from making himself any more porridge, and mixing his flour alone with cold water, ate it in that raw state, that he might be the sooner satisfied."